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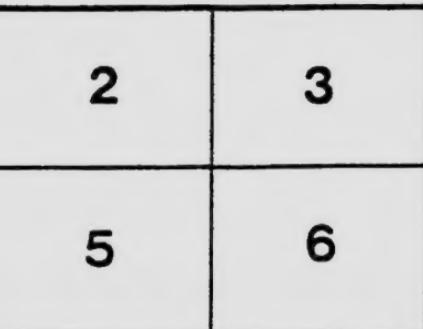
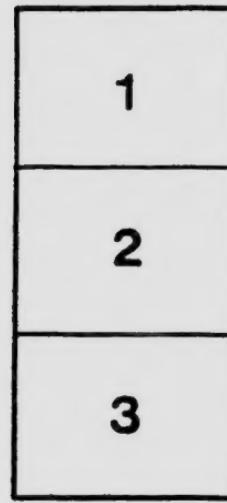
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**HOME RELIGION PAMPHLET No. 2**

# Parents and Home Religion

Prepared by the Board of Sabbath Schools and Young People's Societies of the Presbyterian Church in Canada

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# Parents and Home Religion

## A Message to Fathers and Mothers

The Home was God's first temple and the priest who served at its altar was the father of the family. Other agencies have been devised to assist in the work of Religious Education, but the primary obligation must always remain where first placed, in the hands of those who are God's own partners in the holy office of parent-hood.

The great bulk of parents no doubt feel themselves but poorly equipped for this responsibility but they ought to be encouraged by the fact that their position in itself gives them a great advantage over all others in the teaching of religion. Who is so well qualified to teach the truth of the Fatherhood of God to a little child as he is whom the child calls by the name of father and of whose care and protection he is the conscious daily recipient? And who is in such a favorable position to bring home to the heart of a growing boy the significance of the Cross of Christ, the essential obligations of love and sacrifice, as she is whose daily life is a continuous embodiment of love and sacrifice for him? As a matter of fact all that stands between thousands of tempted souls and the supreme calamity of life, the loss of religious faith, is the memory of a father's devotion or a mother's prayers.

It must be admitted that the home has many competitors to-day that bid for the interest and time of the young and even of

the parents themselves, while the demands of business make it very difficult to gather the family for worship or instruction as was formerly done. Even the Sabbath Day for many offers but little leisure for the cultivation of Home Religion. The multiplicity of church meetings fills up the day for some, while an increasing number allow the day to be encroached upon by recreation and social demands.

Nevertheless, when we consider the paramount importance of Home Religion the difficulties must constitute but a challenge to all parents and home-makers to redeem the time and to discharge the duty. They must answer the criticism about the thing being impossible, as was done in another situation. "Impossible? Very well, then, let us go and do it."

## ATMOSPHERE

The first factor in Home Religion is atmosphere,—for which the mother, as Home-maker-in-chief, is mainly responsible. Every home has an atmosphere of its own, not easily defined but readily felt.

It ought to be the ambition of parents not to be satisfied with a home of comfort and refinement, but one with a distinctively Christian atmosphere as well. In this way would be furnished for their children what Bishop Huntington writes about as "Unconscious Tuition". This indirect influence proceeds from books, pictures, music, but especially from the personality and behaviour of the parents themselves. If children are to honor their parents, the parents must learn to honor each other.

If the children are to acquire gentleness and reverence, the parents must have regard to the tone of their conversation. It is impossible to expect children to come into possession of high Christian ideals in a home where nothing is ever discussed but fashions and sport and the making of money.

## FAMILY WORSHIP

Family worship as conducted generally a quarter of a century ago may have seemed to those of us who were then children to have been a bit irksome, but there are few who will not admit that the memory of that good old practice has followed them like a benediction. As parents themselves now, they should ask if it is fair to cheat their children of this great blessing by yielding to the fashion of the times and omitting from their home life the recognition of God in Family Worship. It may not be possible to hold Family Worship to-day with the regularity and completeness with which it was carried out in the more leisurely times of our fathers, but the main value lies not in the time spent but in the fact of the recognition of God itself. There ought to be in every home in some form what Paul refers to as "The Church in the House". At every meal God can be recognized in the "Grace before meat" said with bowed heads by father or mother or the family in concert. At one meal, breakfast or supper, further exercises in the form of Scripture Reading and prayer ought in most homes to be possible on most of the week days as well

as on Sundays. Where there are children in the homes connected with the Sunday School the Daily Readings for the Uniform Lessons set forth in the Quarterlies may conveniently be used, with comments and questions. Where the Graded Lessons are used, the Bible Story as given in the Lesson Helps for Beginners and Primaries and Juniors, with one additional review of each, would provide a splendid series of daily lessons for each week (see Pamphlet No. 3). The new Revised Book of Praise now rapidly being introduced into the Church might be made the occasion for reviving the good old custom of hymn singing in the home. All parents having at heart the highest welfare of their children ought to join the Family Worship League now being formed throughout the Church.

### BAPTISM, CHURCH ATTENDANCE AND COMMUNION

Parents should avoid the two extremes, of turning over to the Church on the one hand, all the responsibility for the religious training of their children, and on the other, of failing to avail themselves of the benefits of the means of Grace the Church has at her disposal.

Baptism is not held to furnish any magic salvation but as a solemn act of dedication of their children to God on the part of parents and an initiation into the Church of Christ, it is an obligation of first-rate importance.

The fact that the child knows nothing of what goes on at the time is no reason

for assuming as is sometimes done that the ceremony is mere form and may be neglected with impunity.

This sacrament secures for the child the joint solemn undertaking on the part of parents and the Church to furnish for it by the assisting Grace of God an adequate religious nurture.

Parents should avoid giving the impression to the children that the Sunday School is their Church. The Sunday School is only the instruction end of the Church and children need worship as well as instruction for their proper religious development. For this reason all children should attend Church as well as Sunday School at least once a day and preferably with their parents. Besides forming a good habit, very profound impressions are made from the earliest years through personal participation in the exercises of Public Worship.

Regularity in Church-going should be strictly insisted on, otherwise the impression is received that the Church and all that it stands for is of secondary importance.

Leading the children to Christ and to the Lord's Supper is a duty which parents ought to share w<sup>th</sup> the minister and the Sabbath School teacher as part of their baptism vows. A little book by Rev. Robert Pogue, entitled "The Children's Guide to Christ and the Lord's Supper," will help parents to furnish the necessary instruction. It will also help if parents bring their children with them to Communion Service and let them witness for themselves this impressive memorial. In this

way its great truths will sink into their minds and their hearts will be drawn out in desire to participate.

## **HOME STUDY OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON**

There are two occasions when all thoughtful parents will be on the alert to meet their children. One is the hour of their return from Sunday School each Sunday, so as to check up the work of the day and look over the helps, papers and assigned tasks brought home. The other is at the beginning of each quarter to go over the Quarterly together and get a line on the Lessons for the coming three months. Without the inspiration which these two simple obligations involve the work of the Sunday School loses a large part of its effectiveness. Whatever excuse there may be on the part of parents for failure to interest themselves in the home studies of the Day School does not apply to those of the Sunday School, for the Sunday School Lessons are on the level of all parents and the Sabbath Day furnishes the time, as there is but one lesson a week. The home study of the Sunday School Lessons, including the Daily Readings, furnishes the best opportunity there is to-day for parents to get next to their children for the development of Home Religion. (See Pamphlet No. 3.)

## **EXPRESSION, DEEDS, SERVICE**

Three things are necessary to a complete Religious Education—Instruction, Worship and Training—and the home ought to

furnish these three as well as the Church and Sunday School. The Home Study of the Sunday School Lessons furnishes the first of these. Private Devotions and Family Worship the second, but the third equally important is usually left to hazard. The child must be given the opportunity to give expression to what he knows and feels about religion. The tasks assigned in connection with the Sunday School Lessons are intended for this purpose and parents ought to see that the children carry out the expressional tasks. Other helps are also supplied to encourage boys and girls to carry out their religion at home in acts of helpfulness and deeds of service, such as "Home Duties for Trail Rangers" and the "Girls' Code" in Canadian Girls in Training (page 8).

## BOOKS, READING, STORY-TELLING, PICTURES, HELPS

To encourage parents and to help them in the religious upbringing of their children and generally to aid in promoting Home Religion, many helps have been provided. A selected list of these is herewith appended in the hope that parents and others anxious to discharge their duty may find in it something to help them realize their ideals and plans.

### For Parents' Reading

Religious Education in the Family (Cope), \$1.25  
The Boy Problem in the Home (Forbush), \$1.10  
Quiet Talks with the Family (Jefferson), \$1.00  
Child Nature and Child Nurture (St. John), 50c.  
Beckonings from Little Hands (DuBois), 85c.  
The Girl and Her Religion (Slattery), \$1.00

**How to Tell Stories to Children (Bryant), \$1.10**  
Ask for Sample of Home Reading Circle Card

### **For Family Worship**

**The Altar in the Home. (Garvie), \$1.80**

**A Mother's Knee, Prayers to be used in the Religious Training of Children in the Home (Davis), 25 cents.**

**A Book of Family Worship, Readings and Prayers (American Presbyterian Church North), 50 cents.**

**About the Feet of God, Family Prayers for one week (Devereux), 5 cents.**

**Pamphlets for Ministers, Superintendents and Parents, Nos. 1, 2, 3, (copies free).**

**A Family Worship Pledge Card, 60 cents per 100.**

### **For Children's Reading**

**Stories for Sunday Telling (Bailey), \$1.00.**

**Heroes Every Child Should Know (Mabie), 75c.**

**Childhood Bible Stories (12 books) three series, 15, 18, 22 cents.**

**The Peep of Day Series of Stories (6 books), 45 cents each**

**The Golden Rule Series of Stories (4 books), 20, 30, 35 and 40 cents.**

**The Children's Guide to Christ and the Lord's Supper (Pogue), 10 cents.**

**A pamphlet containing Graded List of Books for General Reading (copies free).**

### **Pictures, Hand-Work, Helps**

**Outline Pictures for the Primary Child—A series of 52 outlines. Pictures to be colored by the child (Faris), 30 cents.**

**Children's Parties for Sunday School and Home (Fitch), 85 cents.**

**The Shepherd Psalm Hand-Work Cards—A set of ten cards a child can color with crayons, 18 cents.**

**The Good Samaritan Hand-Work Cards, 16 cents.**

**Trail Rangers Home Helpfulness Cards for teen age boys (sample free).**

**Girls' Code for teen age girls (sample free).**

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